

## Montana Cooperative Development Center

### Assisted Projects

**Linx Transportation Cooperative (formed 2010)** – Covers 28 counties in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. The total potential annual impact is 10.8 million dollars and 197.50 jobs. The annual impact to Montana is 4.1 million dollars and 69 jobs.

**Montana Branded Beef Cooperative (formed 2004)** – Has 60 members markets over 100,000 of cattle. By forming the marketing coop the farmers and ranchers have been able to receive additional 3.5 million dollars in premiums alone.

**Last Chance Café Cooperative (formed 2008)** – By forming a coop the small community of Sunburst, Montana was able to reopen the café and employ 2 full time and 7 part time employees.

**Got Socks Clothing Store Cooperative (formed 2005)** – The cooperative business model provided the community of Colstrip an opportunity to open a clothing store. They provide jobs to 4 people.

**Montana Midwives Cooperative (formed 2010)** – A certified licensed nurse midwife (CLNM) wanting to open a birthing center in Kalispell did not have enough capital to achieve her business goal on her own, came to the Montana Cooperative Development Center for help. Using the cooperative business model she and other CLNMs were able to move forward with opening the birthing center. This allowed the CLMNs to create jobs for themselves and offer a service to the area at a reasonable cost.

**National Native Leadership Cooperative (formed 2010)** - (Thompson Falls, Montana) The National Native Leadership Cooperative, or NNLC, is an employment and economic development cooperative formed to create new employment opportunities for Native Peoples and Native communities through education, project development, and market of member and member companies' qualifications, work experience and abilities. The founders of the NNLC have worked in communities throughout the U.S. for thirty years and these varied business experiences have provided valuable insight into the very specific problems that need to be targeted to ensure the success of rural U.S. economies. The National Native Leadership Cooperative's primary goal is to keep as many dollars circulating within a community as possible through project development and complete utilization of all community project resources.

**Riverside Crossing Senior Housing Cooperative (formed 2008)** - (Hamilton) Riverside Crossing, Montana's first cooperative, for active adults 55+, offers a unique retirement opportunity to the community of Hamilton. The cooperative give seniors another housing option aside from nursing homes and assisted living facilities. It helps the economy by providing an opportunity for seniors to stay in the community and opens up housing for younger people to move in the community.

MONTANA  
**Cooperative**  
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC) is a 501(c)(3) organization, whose purpose is to promote, develop and improve all types of cooperatives businesses, through education, training and technical assistance in order to improve the economic and community conditions of rural Montana.

The MCDC is the only designated state wide organization committed solely to developing businesses using the cooperative business model in all 56 counties and 7 reservations.

The cooperative business model is probably the most complex of the business structures in Montana. Cooperatives are owned by their members, which at times mean working with large numbers of people. It requires hours of work just to bring the group to the point they agree on what the purpose is for forming the cooperative. The process in forming cooperatives has steps which need to be followed in a specific order to be in compliance with Montana law. Because of the complexity of the business model, the numbers of hours to be dedicated to one project and the level of expertise needed, economic development organizations do not provide the service for forming cooperatives, but rely on MCDC to provide that service. The uniqueness is MCDC is the sole professional statewide provider of this service for forming cooperatives, which are on the rise in Montana.

We have seen a 65% increase in rural communities using the cooperative business model to keep businesses open and start new businesses to serve their small towns, farmers and ranchers.

Because of the uniqueness and complexity of the projects most economic developers lack the knowledge to assist the communities and chose not to work with the projects. An example of this would be cooperative housing. The lack of housing has slowed or stopped the growth of our rural Montana communities. The Montana Cooperative Development Center is addressing this issue and is in the process of building the first cooperative senior housing project in Montana, which will make available affordable single-family homes to local employees, and other, even more affordable homes are then made available, as well. The Montana Cooperative Development Center continues to receive calls for assistance in developing cooperative housing because of the complexity of the projects.

The Montana Cooperative Development Center has the knowledge and experience to assist Montana communities and industries with retaining and developing businesses to maintain and improve the economy of Montana. The Montana Cooperative Development Center staff provides professional and comprehensive technical assistance to individuals and groups who are starting a business or have an existing business using the cooperative business model.

Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC) has demonstrated a proven track record in providing technical assistance in rural areas for a wide variety of cooperative ventures and has accomplished effective outcomes.

MCDC has:

- ✓ Formed **40 Cooperative Businesses** in the last 7 years (**5.71 businesses per year**)
- ✓ Secured **4.1 million dollars in grant assistance** and **member equity/matching funds using the state appropriation funds as leverage.**
- ✓ Assisted in **creating or retaining 442 FTE jobs** through the assistance of existing cooperatives or creation of new cooperatives.
- ✓ Provided hands-on assistance to **127 entities with Cooperative Business Education and Project Management;**
- ✓ Directed and managed **44 Feasibility Studies;**
- ✓ Directed and managed **62 Business and Marketing Plans;**
- ✓ Assisted **21 entities with Applied Research;**
- ✓ Provided **legal** assistance to **45 projects;**
- ✓ Provided **financing** for **41 projects;**
- ✓ Provided various **training opportunities** for **79 projects**